

## Message Text

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-05 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 IO-10 SCCT-01

SY-05 EB-07 NEA-10 /100 W  
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R 071825Z NOV 75

FM USMISSION NATO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4477

INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS 5600

AMEMBASSY MADRID

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 USNATO 6081

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, PINT, SP, UK

SUBJ: UK ASSESSMENT OF OUTLOOK FOR SPANISH SUCCESSION

UK REP ON NATO POLITICAL COMMITTEE (MARGETSON) HAS CIRCULATED TO ALL DELS (EXCEPT PORTUGUESE) COPIES OF A "PRELIMINARY AND TENTATIVE ASSESSMENT" OF SPANISH SUCCESSION, "WHICH DOES NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE SETTLED VIEW" OF UK AUTHORITIES.

BEGIN TEXT:

SPAIN: OUTLOOK FOR THE SUCCESSION

### INTRODUCTION

IN THIS NOTE WE SURVEY SOME OF THE OUTSTANDING INTERNAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS WHICH WILL FACE PRINCE JUAN CARLOS ON HIS ACCESSION AS HEAD OF THE SPANISH STATE AND THE PRINCIPAL FORCES WHICH ARE LIKELY TO BE CONTENDING FOR POWER AND INFLUENCE IN POST-FRANCO SPAIN. IN THE MAIN WE DO NOT ATTEMPT TO LOOK BEYOND THE CRITICAL TRANSITIONAL PERIOD OF THE NEXT FEW MONTHS.

2. WE START FROM THE ASSUMPTION THAT FRANCO WILL VERY SOON DIE OR (LESS LIKELY) BE DECLARED PERMANENTLY INCAPACITATED AND THAT  
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THE SUCCESSION WILL PASS TO PRINCE JUAN CARLOS IN DUE FORM WITHOUT SERIOUS CHALLENGE. THE NOMINALLY TEMPORARY TRANSFER TO JUAN CARLOS OF THE FUNCTIONS OF HEAD OF STATE HAS STRENGTHENED HIS HOLD ON THE SUCCESSION; BUT IF FRANCO LINGERS ON, THE

PRINCE'S POLITICAL POSITION COULD BE WEAKENED. THE ONLY CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH WE FORESEE A THREAT TO A SMOOTH SUCCESSION WOULD BE IF, AGAINST ALL THE ODDS, FRANCO WERE TO RECOVER FROM HIS PRESENT ILLNESS SUFFICIENTLY TO INSIST ON RESUMING THE FORMAL APPEARANCE OF POWER BUT WITHOUT THE PHYSICAL OR MENTAL STRENGTH TO EXERCISE IT. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, ACUTE TENSIONS WOULD PROBABLY DEVELOP WITHIN THE REGIME'S POLITICAL AND MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT AND THE POLITICAL POLARISATION OF THE COUNTRY AT LARGE WOULD BE EXACERBATED; THE RESULT WOULD BE TO UNDERMINE PRINCE JUAN CARLOS' POSITION AND TO INCREASE THE THREAT OF A CHALLENGE TO HIS SUCCESSION EITHER FROM HIS FATHER DON JUAN (WHO HAS NEVER FORMALLY ABANDONED HIS CLAIM TO THE THRONE, ALTHOUGH HE HAS RECENTLY STATED THAT HE "WILL NOT DO ANYTHING AGAINST HIS SON") OR PERHAPS FROM THE ANTI-MONARCHIST LEFT. AS THINGS NOW STAND, HOWEVER, WE DO NOT EXPECT FRANCO TO SURVIVE LONG ENOUGH FOR THIS SCENARIO TO DEVELOP.

#### JUAN CARLOS' POSITION

3. OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS SPAIN HAS UNDERGONE AN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REVOLUTION WHILE THE POLITICAL SYSTEM HAS REMAINED IMMOBILISED. THE NEED FOR POLITICAL CHANGE HAS BECOME WIDELY ACCEPTED IN INFLUENTIAL CIRCLES IN THE REGIME. BUT WHILE FRANCO LIVED AND RETAINED ULTIMATE POLITICAL CONTROL THE OPPONENTS OF CHANGE KEPT THE UPPER HAND. THUS PRIME MINISTER ARIAS' ATTEMPT EARLY IN 1974 TO SET IN MOTION A PROCESS OF POLITICAL EVOLUTION TOWARDS A MORE OPEN AND PARTICIPATORY SYSTEM HAS BEEN BLOCKED, ULTIMATELY BY FRANCO HIMSELF; AND THE RECENT GROWTH OF TERRORIST VIOLENCE HAS PROVOKED A PAVOLOVIAN REVERSION TO HARSH REPRESSION OF ALL MANIFESTATIONS OF DISSENT. PRINCE JUAN CARLOS IS KNOWN TO FAVOUR A PROGRAMME OF DEMOCRATIC REFORMS DESIGNED TO BRING ABOUT A CONTROLLED LIBERALISATION OF THE SPANISH POLITICAL SYSTEM. THE FRUSTRATION OF ARIAS' TENTATIVE REFORMS MEANS THAT THE PRINCE CANNOT PRESENT NEW LIBERALISING MEASURES AS THE CONTINUATION OF A PROCESS BEGUN UNDER FRANCO'S AEGIS. HE WILL INHERIT A CON-  
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STITUTIONAL STRUCTURE WHICH IS EXPLICITLY OPPOSED TO THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC TRADITION, WHICH IS INTENDED TO PRESERVE THE EXISTING SYSTEM AND ITS INSTITUTIONS IN VERY MUCH THEIR PRESENT FORM AND WHICH IS NOT EASILY ADAPTABLE TO DEMOCRATIC EVOLUTION. THERE WILL, HOWEVER, BE ONE IMMEDIATE AND CRUCIAL CHANGE: THE REPLACEMENT OF FRANCO'S UNDISPUTED PERSONAL AUTOCRACY BY A CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY OF QUESTIONABLE LEGITIMACY AND UNPROVEN ABILITY AND HAVING AT BEST HALF-HEARTED POPULAR SUPPORT OR TOLERANCE.

4. ON HIS OWN, PRINCE JUAN CARLOS CANNOT REPLACE FRANCO AS THE ULTIMATE SOURCE OF POWER IN SPAIN. THE FUNDAMENTAL TASK FACING THE NEW KING AND HIS MINISTERS WILL BE TO ESTABLISH A BASE OF POPULAR SUPPORT OR AT LEAST ACCEPTANCE WITHOUT ALIENATING THE POWERFUL FORCES OF THE FRANQUIST RIGHT.

JUAN CARLOS IS FRANCO'S CREATION AND IS IDENTIFIED WITH THE ANCIEN REGIME. BUT HIS OWN SURVIVAL, AND THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACEFUL DEMOCRATIC EVOLUTION IN SPAIN, WILL DEPEND CRUCIALLY ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH HE CAN IDENTIFY WITH AND RESPOND TO THE PRESSURES FOR CHANGE WITHOUT PROVOKING A RIGHT-WING BACKLASH FROM THOSE WHO HAVE VESTED MATERIAL AND EMOTIONAL INTERESTS IN THE PRESERVATION OF THE STATUS QUO. IT IS A TALL ORDER.

5. INITIALLY, JUAN CARLOS IS LIKELY TO TRY TO DISTANCE HIMSELF FROM FRANCO'S SHADOW TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE. BUT HE IS LIKELY TO SHY AWAY FROM MOVING TOO FAR TOO FAST. IT MAY BE ARGUED THAT THE SWIFTER AND MORE DECISIVE THE REFORMS HE INTRODUCES, THE BETTER WILL BE HIS CHANCES OF FRUSTRATING THE HOSTILITY OF VESTED INTERESTS AND ATTRACTING THE SUPPORT OF THE OPPOSITION. THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS THAT JUAN CARLOS INTENDED, IMMEDIATELY HE CAME TO POWER, TO APPOINT A TOTALLY NEW PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING A HIGH PROPORTION OF SOCIALISTS, TOGETHER WITH SOME CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND "TECHNICIANS"; AND TO ANNOUNCE A FREE PRESS, THE RIGHT OF FREE ASSEMBLY, FREEDOM TO ESTABLISH DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL PARTIES, AND FREE ELECTIONS WITHIN SIX MONTHS. THE PRINCE MIGHT LIKE TO BE ABLE TO DO THIS; BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE A PIPE DREAM. HE WILL BE WELL AWARE THAT TOO SHARP A BREAK WITH THE PAST WOULD BE CONSTITUTIONALLY DIFFICULT AND WOULD CARRY A HIGH RISK OF VIOLENT REACTION FROM THE RIGHT (INCLUDING THE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES) AND OF DISTURBANCE IN THE COUNTRY AT LARGE.

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AND FROM WHAT WE KNOW OF JUAN CARLOS' TEMPERAMENT AND TRAINING, IT SEEMS MORE LIKELY THAT IN TRYING TO STRIKE A TOLERABLE BALANCE BETWEEN CONTINUITY AND CHANGE, HE WILL TEND TO ERR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION RATHER THAN BOLDNESS. IT IS LIKELY THAT HE WILL COMMIT HIMSELF PUBLICLY TO DEMOCRATIC CHANGE; BUT THAT HE WILL TRY TO BRING IT ABOUT GRADUALLY, AND ADAPTING EXISTING INSTITUTIONS RATHER THAN BY BROAKING WITH THEM.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4478  
INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS 5601  
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6. JUAN CARLOS' CHOICE OF PRIME MINISTER WILL GIVE AN EARLY INDICATION OF HIS INTENTIONS. UNTIL RECENTLY, IT WAS KNOWN THAT HE FAVOURED THE PRESENT PRIME MINISTER ARIAS NAVARRO, WHO SHARES THE PRINCE'S CAUTIONSLY LIBERALISING TENDENCIES. BUT ARIAS HAS PROVED INCAPABLE OF PREVENTING THE RESURGENCE

OF THE REACTIONARY RIGHT DURING FRANCO'S LAST YEAR AND MAY HAVE LOST TOO MUCH CREDIBILITY TO BE PRESENTED AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE. IF THE PRINCE IS LOOKING FOR A "SAFE" CHOICE, NOT TOO CLOSELY OR RECENTLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE EXISTING REGIME, THE POSSIBILITIES FANCIED BY MADRID GOSSIP INCLUDE FRAGA IRIBARNE, A FORMER MINISTER BUT OUT OF OFFICE SINCE 1969; JUAN AREILZA, COUNT OF MOTRICO, A FORMER AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON AND A LEADING MEMBER OF THE "TOLERATED" OPPOSITION WHO HAS NEVER HELD MINISTERIAL OFFICE; OR POSSIBLE GEN MANUEL DIEZ ALEGRIA, THE REPUTEDLY LIBERAL-MINDED FORMER CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF DISMISSED BY FRANCO IN 1974 (BUT IT IS HIGHLY DOUBTFUL WHETHER EH WOULD ACCEPT THE POST, EVEN IF IT WERE OFFERED HIM). WE DOUBT WHETHER JUAN CARLOS WOULD RISK CHOOSING A MAN OUTSIDE THE RECOGNISED ESTABLISHMENT; AND ON BALANCE WE THINK HE WOULD WELL DECIDE TO STICK WITH ARIAS, THE MAN HE KNOWS, AT LEAST INITIALLY.

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#### IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS

7. WHOEVER HE CHOOSES, AND WHATEVER HIS OVERALL POLITICAL STRATEGY, THE PRINCE AND HIS PRIME MINISTER WILL IMMEDIATELY BE FACED WITH DIFFICULT AND POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE PROBLEMS. INTERNAL SECURITY IS LIKELY TO BE THE MOST URGENT. THE BASQUE EXTREMISTS OF ETA AND THE MAOIST URBAN GUERRILLAS OF FRAP COULD STEP UP THEIR TERRORIST ACTIONS IN THE HOPE OF KNOCKING THE NEW REGIME OFF BALANCE IN THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION. EVEN IF THEY DO NOT, THE PARAMILITARY INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES (NOTABLY THE GUARDIA CIVIL, UNDER THE RECENTLY APPOINTED HARDLINER GENERAL CAMPANO) ARE LIKELY TO DEMAND THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO RELAXATION OF THEIR CAMPAIGN AGAINST REGIONALIST AND EXTREME LEFT OPPOSITION. THERE IS A CONTINUING RISK OF ESCALATING TERROR AND COUNTER-TERROR FROM THE POLITICAL EXTREMES WHICH COULD ENDANGERSTABILITY. THE DRAECONIAN ANTI-TERRORIST DECREE-LAW PASSED IN AUGUST IS STILL IN FORCE AND JUAN CARLOS WILL HAVE TO DECIDE QUITE SOON HOW TO DEAL WITH THOSE WHO FALL FOUL OF IT. HIS DECISION IS LIKELY TO HAVE FAR-REACHING CONSEQUENCES. CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH THE INTERNAL SECURITY PROBLEM IS THE WIDER QUESTION OF

REGIONALISM. BASQUE AND PERHAPS CATALAN AND GALICIAN NATIONALISTS ARE LIKELY TO SET UP THEIR DEMANDS FOR INCREASED CULTURAL AUTONOMY AND SOME DEGREE OF POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL DEVOLUTION AS THE PRICE FOR POLITICAL PEASE. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON THE NEW REGIME'S WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY TO SEEK POLITICAL SOLUTIONS AND TO EMER MADRID'S CONTRALISING TRADITION IN PLACE OF CONTINUING REPRESSION.

8. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS COULD HAVE AN IMPORTANT BEARING BOTH ON THE REGIONAL ISSUE AND ON THE WIDER STABILITY OF THE COUNTRY. THE SPANISH "ECONOMIC MIRACLE" AND THE ENSUING SPREAD OF PROSPERITY HAVE BEEN WIDELY REGARDED AS THE MOST EFFECTIVE DETERRENT TO VIOLENT POLITICAL DISTURBANCE IN SPAIN. THIS PROBABLY STILL HOLDS GOOD. BUT THE ECONOMY IS NOW SUFFERING THE EFFECTS OF WORLD-WIDE DEPRESSION AND INFLATION AND THERE HAS BEEN A SHARP DOWNTURN IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY OVER THE PAST YEAR. IN THIS SITUATION ECONOMIC DISCONTENT COULD EASILY BE TRANSLATED INTO POLITICAL UNREST, ESPECIALLY IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY AND CATALONIA WHICH CONTAIN A HIGH PROPORTION OF SPANISH INDUSTRY.

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9. FINALLY, IN FOREIGN AFFIARS THE MOST PRESSING PROBLEM WILL BE THE LIQUIDATION OF THE SPANISH PRESENCE IN THE SPANISH SAHARA. THIS MAY CAUSE SOME RUMBLINGS ON THE ULTRA-NATIONALIST RIGHT. BUT THE SPANISH DECISION TO WITHDRAW HAS ALREADY BEEN TAKEN BY FRANCO; PROVIDED IT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT THE HUMILIATION OF SPAIN BY MOROCCO, IT IS UNLIKELY TO HAVE MORE THAN A MARGINAL EFFECT ON SPANISH INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS.

THE BALANCE OF FORCES

10. THE NEW KING OF SPAIN WILL BE AN ARTIFICIAL AND ANACHRONISTIC CREATION; TO BEGIN WITH HE WILL BE ABLE TO COUNT ON THE PERSONAL LOYALTY OF FEW, THE HOSTILITY OF MANY AND THE INDIFFERENCE OF SUSPENDED JUDGEMENT OF THE MAJORITY. DESPITE (OR PERHAPS BECAUSE OF) THE GROWING POLARISATION OF SPANISH POLITICS OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS OR SO, A SIZABLE PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION WOULD BE LIKELY TO GIVE JUAN CARLOS THEIR SUPPORT IF HE APPEARED CAPABLE OF ACTING AS THE INSTRUMENT OF NON-VIOLENT AND NON-REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE. BUT HIS ABILITY TO DO SO WILL DEPEND TO A LARGE EXTENT ON THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN HIS PROMISE AND PERFORMANCE AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE BALANCE OF POLITICAL FORCES IN THE COUNTRY.

11. INITIALLY, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, JUAN CARLOS SHOULD BE ABLE TO COUNT ON THE SUPPORT OF THE ARMED FORCES, AND ESPECIALLY THE ARMY, WHICH ARE AT PRESENT THE ONLY TRULY POWERFUL AND REASONABLY COHESIVE BODY IN SPAIN. THE ARMY HAS NEVER HAD TO INTERVENE DIRECTLY IN POLITICS SINCE THE ENDING OF THE CIVIL WAR; BUT IT IS CONSCIOUS OF ITS CONSTITUTIONAL DUTY TO SAFEGUARD THE INTEGRITY OF THE STATE AND REMAINS THE ULTIMATE ARBITER OF POWER. ALTHOUGH PREDOMINANTLY RIGHT-WING IN OUTLOOK

AND OVERWHELMINGLY ANTI-COMMUNIST, THE POLITICAL ATTITUDES OF THE ARMY LEADERSHIP REFLECT TO SOME EXTENT THE WIDE VARIETY OF OPINION TO BE FOUND CO-EXISTING WITHIN THE POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENT. THE UPPER ECHELOS OF THE ARMY CAN PROBABLY BE BROUGHT TO ACCEPT THE NEED FOR POLITICAL EVOLUTION; BUT THEY WILL NOT TOLERATE POLICIES WHICH APPEAR TO THEM TO CONTAIN A THREAT TO PUBLIC ORDER OR NATIONAL INTEGRITY, AND THIS COULD BE A POWERFUL OBSTACLE TO BOLD DEMOCRATIC OR REGIONAL INITIATIVES BY JUAN CARLOS. THE MIDDLE AND JUNIOR RANKS OF THE OFFICER CORPS ARE AN ENIGMA: TRADITIONALLY APOLITICAL, THERE ARE SIGNS (EG IN THE APPEARANCE OF THE EMBRYONIC DEMOCRATIC MILITARY

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UNION AND THE ARRESTS OF A DOZEN OF ITS MEMBERS) THAT LONG-STANDING PROFESSIONAL DISCONTENTS OVER PAY AND PROMOTION PROSPECTS AND THE NEED FOR MODERNISATION MAY BE TAKING MORE OVERTLY POLITICAL FORM. THIS DEVELOPMENT IS IN NO WAY COMPARABLE TO THE POLITICISATION OF THE PORTUGUESE ARMED FORCES IN AFRICA. IT WILL NOT SIGNIFICANTLY WEAKEN THE ARMY'S INITIAL SUPPORT FOR JUAN CARLOS. BUT IT IS A WARNING THAT IN A CRISIS, THE COHESION OF THE ARMY IN SUPPORT OF THE ESTABLISHED POLITICAL ORDER CAN NO LONGER BE TAKEN COMPLETELY FOR GRANTED. IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THE COMMUNIST PARTY APPEARS TO BE PAYING INCREASING ATTENTION TO PENETRATION OF THE ARMED FORCES.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4479  
INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS 5602  
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12. THE CHURCH, ONCE (ALONG WITH THE ARMY AND THE FALANGE) ON OF THE CENTRAL PILLARS OF THE FRANQUIST ORDER, HAS IN RECENT YEARS BECOME PROGRESSIVELY ALIENATED FROM THE REGIME. IT

NOW PROJECTS A STRONGLY LIBERAL REFORMIST INFLUENCE ACROSS THE POLITICAL SCENE, WHILST A MINORITY OF PRIESTS ARE ACTIVE AT BOTH EXTREMES OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM. THE CHURCH COULD BE A USEFUL SOURCE OF SUPPORT FOR JUAN CARLOS.

13. AT PRESENT, POLITICAL GROUPS IN SPAIN CAN BE ROUGHLY DIVIDED INTO TWO BASIC CATEGORIES: THOSE WHICH ARE OPPOSED OUTRIGHT TO FRANCO AND THE CORPORATIVE STATE (AND THEREFORE BY DEFINITION ILLEGAL); AND THOSE WHICH ARE PREPARED TO WORK WITHIN THE SYSTEM. LEGITIMATE POLITICAL ACTIVITY, INCLUDING THE NEW POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS, IS ALL CONFINED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A SINGLE ORGANISATION, THE MOVEMENT. BUT THIS FORMAL HOMOGENEITY MASKS A BEWILDERING ARRAY OF COMPETING POLITICAL GROUPINGS, RANGING FROM THE ANTI-MONARCHIST ULTRA-RIGHT, LOYAL ONLY TO FRANCO, THROUGH MANY VARIETIES OF FALANGISTAS, THE MASS OF OPPORTUNISTIC AND TIME-SERVING APARATCHIKI OF THE MOVEMENT, THE CONSERVATIVE TECHNECRATS OF OPUS DEI, TO THE APERTURISTAS ON THE LEFT OF THE MOVEMENT WHO SEEK THE LIBERALISATION OF THE REGIME AS THE ESSENTIAL CARD OF ENTRY  
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TO THE EEC AND WHO FORM A KIND OF LOYAL OPPOSITION. THE "CENTRE" IN SPANISH POLITICS IS AN EMORPHOUS ENTITY: RIGHT-OF-CENTRE IS OFTEN INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM FULLY FLEDGED ESTABLISHMENT, WHILE LEFT-OF-CENTRE SHADES INTO ILLEGAL OPPOSITION. DEFINITION IS FURTHER BLURRED BY THE HIGHLY PERSONALISED NATURE OF SPANISH POLITICS. BUT IT IS FROM THIS BROADLY CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT CENTRE, REPRESENTING THE CONSERVATIVE-REFORMIST MAINSTREAM OF THE BOURGEOIS POST-CIVIL WAR GENERATION, AND INFLUENTIAL IN INDUSTRY AND FINANCE, THAT JUAN CARLOS IS LIKELY TO SEEK AND FIND HIS PRINCIPAL SOURCE OF POLITICAL SUPPORT. MEN SUCH AS FRAGA AND AREILZA FALL INTO THIS CATEGORY.

14. THE ILLEGAL OPPOSITION IS SIMILARLY FRAGMENTED AND, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, THE OPPOSITION PARTIES OF THE LEFT SHARE THE COMMON CHARACTERISTIC OF ALL SPANISH POLITICAL GROUPS - LACK OF MASS SUPPORT. DURING THE PAST YEAR, HOWEVER, TWO MAIN GROUPINGS HAVE EMERGED: THE JUNTA DEMOCRATICA, DOMINATED BY THE COMMUNISTS, BUT ALSO INCLUDING TIerno GALVAN'S POPULAR SOCIALIST PARTY (PSP) AND THE MAOIST SPANISH WORK PARTY (PTE); AND THE PLATAFORMA DE CONVERGENCIA DEMOCRATICA, OF WHICH THE MOST IMPORTANT CONSTITUENT IS THE SPANISH SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY (PSOE), THE LARGEST SOCIALIST PARTY IN SPAIN, ALONG WITH VARIOUS CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT AND REGIONAL GROUPS. ALTHOUGH CONTACTS BETWEEN THE JUNTA AND THE PLATAFORMA HAVE BEEN TAKING PLACE FOR SOME TIME, AND THE TWO GROUPINGS ISSUED A JOINT STATEMENT IN SEPTEMBER DENOUNCING THE GOVERNMENT'S NEW ANTI-TERRORIST LAW, THERE IS NO FORMAL ALLIANCE BETWEEN THEM AND SUCH AN ALLIANCE NOW SEEMS UNLIKELY AT LEAST UNTIL THE OPPOSITION IS ABLE TO ASSESS THE LIKELY SCOPE AND PACE OF POLITICAL CHANGE UNDER THE NEW REGIME. REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PSOE, THE PSP AND THE ILLEGAL

LEFT-WING WORKERS' COMMISSIONS HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY ARE PREPARED TO ACT IN A RESPONSIBLE MANNER DURING THE INITIAL PERIOD OF TRANSITION SO AS TO GIVE JUAN CARLOS A CHANCE TO OPEN UP THE POLITICAL SYSTEM. IF A PROCESS OF CONTROLLED LIBERALISATION IS TO HAVE ANY REAL CHANCE OF SUCCESS, IT WILL BE IMPORTANT FOR JUAN CARLOS TO ATTRACT AT LEAST THE TACIT CO-OPERATION OF THE MAJORITY OF THE NON-COMMUNIST OPPOSITION. BUT THE PROSPECTS DO NOT LOOK PROMISING: HM EMBASSY AT MADRID HAVE REPORTED THAT BOTH THE PSOE AND PSP, AND EVEN THE LEFT-WING CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, NOW APPEAR CONVINCED THAT THE GRADUAL  
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DEMOCRATISATION OF THE REGIME FROM WITHIN IS NO LONGER FEASIBLE, AND THAT IT IS NOW ESSENTIAL TO HAVE A COMPLETE BREAK WITH THE PAST LEADING TO RAPID AND RADICAL CHANGE.

15. THE COMMUNIST PARTY (PCE) HAS DECLARED ITS OPPOSITION TO JUAN CARLOS' SUCCESSION. BUT IT IS UNLIKELY TO ATTEMPT A TRIAL OF STRENGTH RIGHT AWAY: THIS WOULD RISK FORFEITING POPULAR SUPPORT AND ALIENATING POLITICAL ALLIES; MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE PCE CANNOT TAKE ON THE ARMY. NEVERTHELESS, ITS ORGANISATIONAL STRENGTH AND COHESION AND ITS GROWING INFLUENCE AMONG ORGANISED LABOUR GIVE IT A POWERFUL DISRUPTIVE POTENTIAL WHICH IT MAY SEEK TO EXPLOIT BEFORE LONG IN ORDER TO FORCE A RECOGNISED PLACE FOR ITSELF IN THE NEW POLITICAL SYSTEM, OR FAILING THAT TO SABOTAGE IT. THE PCE'S IMMEDIATE AIM IS LIKELY TO BE TO FRUSTRATE ANY EFFORTS BY THE NEW REGIME TO SEPARATE IT FROM THE NON-COMMUNIST LEFT (A PCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE STATEMENT OF 24 OCTOBER CALLED FOR "A BROAD COALITION GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION, COMPRISING RIGHT, CENTRE AND LEFT-WING FORCES"); THE LEGALISATION OF THE PCE COULD BECOME A CENTRAL ISSUE OF THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD. BUT THE PCE AT PRESENT LOOKS NO MORE LIKELY TO ACCEPT THE NEW REGIME UNDER JUAN CARLOS THAN THE LATTER IS TO ACCEPT THE PCE INTO THE LEGITIMATE POLITICAL STRUCTURE.

#### CONCLUSIONS

16. WE DO NOT EXPECT ANY IMMEDIATE SERIOUS CHALLENGE TO JUAN CARLOS' SUCCESSION. THE ARMY, WHICH REMAINS THE ULTIMATE ARBITER OF POWER, WILL RALLY TO HIM, AT LEAST INITIALLY; AND THE MAIN LEFT WING OPPOSITION GROUPS SEEM PREPARED TO GIVE HIM TIME TO SHOW HIS HAND. EXTREME LEFT AND SEPARATIST GUERRILLAS ARE LIKELY TO CONTINUE AND PERHAPS STEP UP THEIR TERRORIST ACTIVITY, BUT THIS IS UNLIKELY TO DISRUPT THE SUCCESSION. THE NEW REGIME'S APPROACH TO INTERNAL SECURITY IS, HOWEVER, LIKELY TO BECOME ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT AND EXPLOSIVE PROBLEMS FACING IT, TOGETHER WITH THE RELATED ISSUES OF REGIONALISM AND ECONOMIC DISCONTENT, WHICH COULD COMBINE TO PROVOKE WIDESPREAD POLITICAL UNREST.

17. THE KEY ISSUE WHICH WILL DETERMINE THE COURSE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN SPAIN WILL BE WHETHER JUAN CARLOS AND HIS MINISTERS, WHO



WILL INHERIT FRANCO'S ANTI-DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL SYSTEM BUT NOT  
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HIS ULTIMATE POLITICAL POWER, CAN RESPOND TO THE PRESSURES  
FOR LIBERALISING CHANGE WITHOUT PROVOKING A VIOLENT  
BACKLASH FROM THE STILL POWERFUL FORCES HAVING A VESTED INTEREST  
IN THE PRESERVATION OF THE STATUS QUO. JUAN CARLOS IS LIKELY  
TO COMMIT HIMSELF TO A PROCESS OF CONTROLLED DEMOCRATIC CHANGE,  
BUT TO SEEK TO IMPLEMENT IT GRADUALLY AND BY ADAPTING EXISTING  
INSTITUTIONS, RATHER THAN BY A SWIFT AND RADICAL BREAK WITH  
THE PAST. THIS COULD GAIN HIM THE SUPPORT OF A MAJORITY OF  
SPANIARDS, WHO WANT NON-VIOLENT AND NON-REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE  
AND MAY ACCEPT JUAN CARLOS AS THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE TO CHAOS.  
THE DANGER IS THAT HIS PROGRAMME MAY BE REJECTED AS TOO RADICAL  
BY THE RIGHT AND TOO TIMID BY THE NON-COMMUNIST LEFT (IT IS  
DIFFICULT TO CONCEIVE OF CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THE PCE WOULD  
ACCEPT JUAN CARLOS OR BE ACCEPTED BY HIM). IF THAT HAPPENS,  
THE POLITICAL POLARISATION OF SPAIN WOULD BE LIKELY TO ACCELERATE,  
WITH DANGEROUS AND UNPREDICTABLE CONSEQUENCES. IN SHORT,  
WE DO NOT FORESEE AN IMMEDIATE EXPLOSION, BUT ONE COULD FOLLOW  
IN ONE, TWO OR THREE YEARS.  
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**Subject:** UK ASSESSMENT OF OUTLOOK FOR SPANISH SUCCESSION  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PGOV, PINT, SP, UK  
**To:** STATE INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS  
MADRID  
**Type:** TE  
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